

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

S E C R E T SEOUL 1543

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, CG

SUBJECT: ROKG REACTS CAUTIOUSLY TO ZAIRE MILITARY AID REQUEST

REF: (A) SEOUL 1318, (B) SEOUL 1319, (C) TOKYO 2693, (D) STATE

44618

1. FOLLOWING A PRACTICE THE ROKG HAS ADHERED TO CONSISTENTLY SINCE ITS INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM, PRESIDENT PAK CHONG-HUI DID NOT GIVE MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT TO ZAIRIAN REQUESTS FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE CONVEYED BY SPECIAL ENVOY ENGULU DURING MEETING IN BLUE HOUSE FEBRUARY 26. ACCORDING TO MOFA CHIEF OF WEST AFRICA SECTION KYUN HI-KANG, WHO ACTED AS INTERPRETER FOR MOST OF CONVERSATION, PAK EXPLAINED TO ENGULU DIFFICULT MILITARY SITUATION ROK FINDS ITSELF IN VIS-A-VIS NORTH KOREA AND SAID THAT BECAUSE ROK TOO WAS A DEVELOPING COUNTRY AND BECAUSE OF THREAT FROM NORTH, ROK WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ZAIRE WITH MILITARY EQUIPMENT REQUESTED. ACCORDING TO HYUN, PAK DID SAY THAT THE ROK WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE ROK TO TRAIN ZAIRIAN SOLDIERS IN THE ROK AS REQUESTED. IN ADDITION, HYUN SAID FOREIGN MINISTER PAK TONG-CHIN IN FEBRUARY 25 CONVERSATION RESPONDED ENCOURAGINGLY TO POSSIBILITY OF PROVISION OF NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT SUCH AS COMBAT BOOTS AND MEDICAL KITS. HYUN SAID PRESIDENT PAK TOLD ENGULU NEW ROK AMBASSADOR TO ZAIRE, WHEN HE IS NAMED, WILL

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DISCUSS ZAIRIAN REQUEST FURTHER WITH GOZ.

2. DURING FEBRUARY 25 MEETING WITH ENGULU, FOREIGN MINISTER EXPLAINED ROK COMPETITION WITH NORTH KOREA IN UNGA AND ASKED FOR ZAIRIAN SUPPORT. ENGULU RESPONDED ORALLY, AND LATER IN LETTER TO FORNMIN, THAT HE QTE WOULD FAITHFULLY REPORT ROK WISH (TO PRESIDENT MOBUTU) AND WOULD WORK WITHIN HIS MEANS FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF ROK DESIRES UNQTE.

3. COMMENT: ENGULU'S VISIT TO SEOUL CONTRASTS INTERESTINGLY WITH HIS TOKYO VISIT. IN SEOUL HE CAME PREPARED TO TALK BUSINESS, HAD SEVERAL MEETINGS AND LUNCHEONS WITH ROK OFFICIALS AT HIGHEST LEVELS, LAID HIS CARDS ON THE TABLE, LEFT WITH ROK SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING FOR HIS COUNTRY'S SITUATION SOMEWHAT IMPROVED AND WITH CAUTIOUS BUT MODERATELY ENCOURAGING ASSURANCES OF SOME ASSISTANCE. (ROK OFFICIALS IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFF ON NUMEROUS PAST OCCASIONS HAVE BEEN CONSISTANTLY CAUTIOUS ABOUT GETTING INVOLVED IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE BECAUSE OF POLITICAL COMPLICATIONS THIS TYPE OF ASSISTANCE ENTAILS.) ADDITIONALLY, ROKG HAS SHOWN THAT IT CONTINUES TO ATTACH SUBSTANTIAL IMPORTANCE TO POSITIONS TAKEN BY OTHER NATIONS IN UNGA KOREA DEBATE, DESPITE DOWNGRADING GIVEN UN DEBATE IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS DURING RECENT MONTHS AND CAUTIOUS ATTITUDE THEY HAVE DISPLAYED IN BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS WITH US IN PAST TWO WEEKS. END COMMENT.

4. FONMIN TOLD AMBASSADOR MARCH 3 HE HAD BEEN SURPRISED BY RECENTLY ANNOUNCED MEETING AND AGREEMENT BETWEEN PRESIDENT MOBUTU AND MPLA LEADER AGOSTINO NETO COMING SO CLOSELY ON HEELS OF ENGULU VISIT. HE WAS APPARENTLY PURTURBED THAT HE HAD NOT GOTTEN ANY HINT OF THIS DEVELOPMENT FROM ENGULU.

5. DURING CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, HYUN ALSO MENTIONED MOBUTU-NETO AGREEMENT, SAID HE HAD NOT YET HAD REPORT FROM ROK EMBASSY KINSHASA, AND ASKED IF REPORTED AGREEMENT WAS LIKELY TO AFFECT ZAIRE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ANGOLA OR US POSITION. EMBOFF REPLIED IT UNLIKELY US POSTURE REGARDING ZAIRE WOULD BE AFFECTED AND UNDERTOOK TO KEEP MOFA INFORMED REGARDING ANGOLA-ZAIRE DEVELOPMENTS AS THEY CAME TO EMBASSY ATTENTION. REQUEST SEOUL BE PUT ON DISTRIBUTION FOR ANY RELEVANT REPORTING ON THIS SUBJECT WHICH MAY BE SHARED WITH ROKG.

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